



MONTHLY REPORT FEBRUARY 2020

Commercial and Recreational Fisheries

- Not even February reared its winter head. While the shellfishery was closed three times for temps below 28, most of the month was mild providing for both intertidal and boat landings.
- The department was busy with overwintering grant inspections, and at the end of the month, getting its seed oysters out of the pit and racks back out onto the grant. This meant that we had another month with lower commercial patrols than usual.
- Our rough, conservative estimate of commercial catches for the month is probably more than 145 bushels of oysters, 60 bushels of quahogs, 131 bushels of blood clams and 157 bushels of bay scallops.
- The reduction in bay scallops may be attributed to both diminishing adults in the harbor and a slowing down of markets.
- We polled the dragger captains in the beginning of the month about the possible extension of bay scallop season, which closes March 31. Opinions were divided. No one approached us about it on their own. We decided not to petition DMF.
- Very little recreational activity was noted, but again, we were pulled in other directions.
- We estimate that potentially a couple of bushels of quahogs and more than five bushels of oysters could have been harvested in the recreational fishery.
- We continued to hold orientations for first-time commercial permit holders.
- We met with four grant holders about transfers and required timeline and paperwork.

Enforcement

- The grant overwintering season ended at the Shellfish Advisory Board (SAB) meeting on February 10 when all decided that due to ten-day forecast and mild winter to date, it was safe to bring gear and oysters back out to grants.
- End of Season Overwintering Summary:
 - A total of 72 contracts were turned in listing 2,151 racks, an 850 reduction from the winter of 2019!
 - About 10 additional grant inspections were conducted, bringing the total to 93.
 - Four more written warnings were issued, bringing the total to 29.
 - Given tides, we weren't able to conduct three deep water follow up inspections.
 - Three contracts were never received, even though written warnings were issued. Certified mail was returned. We will propose altering regulation language for Section 7.19.6 per Town Counsel advice.
 - 12 grants were out of compliance: six for clam nets and six for racks. Enforcement had to stop because at SAB public meeting on 2/10 all agreed that the threat of ice was gone and grant holders could begin bringing gear and oysters back out to grants the next day, thereby nullifying any further action on overwintering infractions.
- A verbal warning was given to a commercial fisherman about driving on beach grass.

State and Town Relations

- Deputy Shellfish Constable Chris Manulla took the state biologist out for water testing, including for the Herring River opening.
- Shellfish Constable Nancy Civetta attended a Shellfish Advisory Board meeting and presented the final plan for allowing dragging of the federal channel in the inner harbor.
- Civetta met with contractor, Conservation Agent and DPW Director about federal grants available for stormwater management needs to protect shellfish habitat.
- Civetta and Manulla met various times with Harbormasters about channel dragging.
- We conducted a site visit and photo survey at a revetment project at Herring River to determine shellfish resources that would be impacted.
- Civetta attended a Dredging Task Force Meeting with County staff.
- Civetta attended a Department Heads meeting.
- Civetta and Mankevetch participated in an AmeriCorps review and site visit.
- Civetta attended a listening session about an intermunicipal agreement for the development of a shoreline management plan.

Propagation

- The most important thing we did this month was work closely with the Health and Conservation Department, the National Park Service, our wastewater consultant and a variety of state departments to finish our application process with the Mass. Environmental Protection Agency to allow the department to continue its long-established practice of placing shellfish shells in the harbor to catch oyster spat. We provided a detailed addendum to our initial application and solicited seven letters of support plus two sign-on support letters from commercial shellfishermen.
- We took racks out to our propagation bed and took all of our seed oysters out of the pits and got them back in the water on the bed.
- Assistant Constable John Mankevetch took the Chief of Natural Resource Management and Science at Cape Cod National Seashore on a site visit to the Herring River open shellfishing areas to demonstrate the effectiveness of cultch for catching oyster spawn how it becomes an integral part of the natural environment.
- Civetta and Mankevetch attended a Barnstable County Shellfish Officers Association meeting about municipal propagation programs for the 2020 growing season and shellfish disease updates.
- We put in orders with the County for 145,000 field plant oysters from state and county funds, plus another 100,000 field plant oysters and 300,000 field plant quahogs from our budget 180 for our 2020 propagation efforts.

Education and Public Relations

- Civetta was interviewed by the *Cape Cod Times* about the department's budget.
- Civetta met with Mia Baumgarten about initiating a video series to capture the shellfishing history of the town directly from those who participated in it. She followed up with Library Director to house the effort at the Library.
- One Commercial Shellfish Crier was distributed on Feb. 21 regarding the program for opening of the federal channel in the inner harbor to shellfish dragging on Mar. 6, prior to the fall harbor dredging. Criteria for participation were outlined so all could prepare.

Respectfully submitted, Nancy Civetta, Shellfish Constable